

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FY 2018 – FY 2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION: The Arkansas Department of Education provides leadership, support, and service to schools, districts, and communities so every student graduates prepared for college, career, and community engagement.

VISION: The Arkansas Department of Education is transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education.

CORE VALUES:

- **Leadership**
 - a. Striving to be a model of excellence that is dedicated to professional and ethical standards, the whole child, and effective results.
 - b. Driving action toward excellence through informed risk-taking.
 - c. Protecting the public trust by ensuring quality and accountability.
- **Support**
 - a. Collaborating with others through mutual respect, trust, and professionalism.
 - b. Communicating in an open, honest, and transparent manner.
 - c. Fostering new ideas and promoting effective practices.
- **Service**
 - a. Providing quality service in a respectful, effective, and professional manner.
 - b. Administering agency programs and services with integrity, honesty, and transparency.
 - c. Leveraging state resources in a wise, efficient, and productive manner.

GOALS:

1. Each student will meet or exceed educational milestones along pathways to graduate prepared for college, career, and community engagement.
2. Each student will meet or exceed his/her expected individual growth annually.
3. Each student will develop and apply personal competencies that promote learning and success in life.
4. Each student will be actively engaged in college, career preparation, military service, and/or competitive employment one year after graduation.
5. The Arkansas Department of Education will build the capacity of each team member to provide efficient and effective customer service that benefits students, respects taxpayers, and serves all stakeholders.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES Arkansas submitted the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) application September 15, 2017. The data used in the ESSA School Index will be the same data used to monitor the goals/measurable objectives. It will take one year to establish the first data point (baseline) and three years to have enough data points to determine a trend. Baseline data will be established during the 2017-2018 school year for goals 1 and 2.

Arkansas' strategic plan is based on a strong theory of action that shifts the focus of the ADE's work. The department seeks to empower local districts to make decisions that promote success for their students. Local education agencies will be encouraged to harness local, state, and federal resources to enhance outcomes for all students, particularly those schools in need of support and those schools historically underserved.

GOAL 1 SUMMARY

Goal 1: Each student will meet or exceed educational milestones along pathways to graduate prepared for college, career, and community engagement. (This aligns with the governor's education goals to "increase student performance at all grade levels," "raise enrollment and graduation rates of secondary and post-secondary students in demand fields," and "increase teacher and school leader effectiveness.")

Goal explanation: Educational milestones are checkpoints to ensure that a student is ready for the next stage of learning on the way to high school graduation, college, career, and engagement in community life.

Similar to developmental benchmarks as children grow from infancy through various stages to adulthood, students grow as they progress in their learning. To be successful in mastering new content and acquiring new skills, certain foundations of learning must be in place. For example, students need to read fluently before transitioning from "learning to read" to "reading to learn."

On the way to college, career, and citizenship readiness by high school graduation, many students will reach milestones prior to their peers and will move on, perhaps with enhanced opportunities. Other students will proceed in pace with their peers. Some students (for various reasons) may not meet milestones as expected to demonstrate readiness for what comes next in learning and will likely need extra assistance to prepare for the new challenges.

Measure: Increase the percentage of students "ready" or "exceeds" on state assessments (ACT Aspire). Preliminary data indicate the 2016 state percentage of students in Grades 3-10 who met "ready" or "exceeds" is 43.35% in math and 47.12% in English language arts. Preliminary data indicate the 2017 state percentage of students in Grades 3-10 who met "ready" or "exceeds" is 47.87% in math and 52.56% in English language arts.

The Arkansas Department of Education has set a long-term achievement goal of 80 percent of students achieving a test-based grade-level proficiency score, which is indicated by a “ready” or “exceeds” performance level on the state assessment. The goals are set over a 12-year period, signaling the state’s approach for improvement systemically as students enter Arkansas’ school districts and progress through their educational journey and will be measured by checkpoints along the way. The long-term goals and checkpoints for progress are aligned with the goals of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education’s Closing the Gap 2020 Master Plan (ADHE, 2017) includes a focus on increasing college completion by reducing the percent of students needing college remediation (as determined by the ACT scores) and by increasing first year retention rates (as determined by success in first year core courses). The ACT Aspire scores are empirically linked to predict students’ potential ACT scores, which are among the factors used by Arkansas postsecondary institutions to predict student first year retention/success.

Strategies:

- Strategy: 1.1 - We believe when ADE advocates for policies and provides guidance to enable student-focused learning systems, and educators implement student-focused learning systems, then students will meet or exceed educational milestones along the pathway to graduate prepared for college, career, and community engagement.
- Strategy: 1.2 - We believe when high quality learning standards are established with support for a student focused learning system, and educators implement rigorous instruction with high quality standards within a student focused system, then students will meet or exceed educational milestones along the pathway to graduate prepared for college, career, and community engagement.
- Strategy: 1.3 - We believe when ADE provides an educator career continuum with multiple pathways for advancement to promote excellence in teaching and leading, and educators utilize the career continuum to recruit, support, and retain excellent teachers and leaders, then students will meet or exceed educational milestones along the pathway to graduate prepared for college, career, and community engagement.
- Strategy: 1.4 - We believe when ADE transitions to flexible, comprehensive assessment systems, and educators make informed decisions using data from multiple measures and indicators, then students will meet or exceed educational milestones along the pathway to graduate prepared for college, career, and community engagement.
- Strategy: 1.5 - We believe when ADE rewards, supports, and intervenes in districts and/or schools through a flexible, comprehensive state accountability system, and educators and the public make data-informed decisions, then students will meet or exceed educational milestones along the pathway to graduate prepared for college, career, and community engagement.
- Strategy: 1.6 - We believe when ADE provides guidance and supports on building partnerships within district and school communities that include child nutrition, extended learning, and health services personnel, then educators will integrate student learning with physical, health

and wellness development, and each student will meet or exceed educational milestones along pathways to graduate prepared for college, career and community engagement.

GOAL 2 SUMMARY

Goal 2: Each student will meet or exceed his/her expected individual growth annually. (This aligns with the governor’s education goals to “increase student performance at all grade levels” and “increase teacher and school leader effectiveness.”)

Goal Explanation: Students vary in the pace at which they meet the expectations of each established educational milestone on the way to graduation. Students meeting expected milestones at a faster pace are challenged to maintain this higher rate of progress, moving forward at a steeper trajectory toward the next goal. Some students' progress is not sufficient to prepare them for the next milestone, so their learning must be accelerated, instruction supplemented or altered, and additional supports provided. Classroom teachers play a critical role in designing learning experiences that move each student along the pathway to meet and exceed the expected goals for each individual.

Measure: Increase the percentage of students meeting or exceeding growth annually. Individual student growth will be included in the ESSA School Index aggregated to the teacher and school levels. A value added growth model will be utilized at the school level in the ESSA School Index for federal and state accountability. For optimal progress and to maintain performance at expected readiness levels, students should meet or exceed their individual expected growth each year. As students meet their expected growth annually the state will see an increase in the percentage of students “ready” or “exceeds” on state assessments (Goal 1).

Strategies:

- Strategy: 2.1 - We believe when ADE advocates for policies and provides guidance related to the use of multiple measures of student growth, and educators use multiple measures to inform student focused learning, then students will meet or exceed their expected individual growth annually.
- Strategy: 2.2 - We believe when ADE develops aligned data collection and reporting tools to support the use of growth measures, and educators use data to provide appropriate support, then students will meet or exceed expected individual growth annually.
- Strategy: 2.3 - We believe when ADE provides professional learning, avenues for advancement, and recognition of excellent teachers and leaders, and educators support their colleagues in facilitating effective student-focused learning, then students will meet or exceed their expected individual growth annually.
- Strategy: 2.4 - We believe when ADE rewards, supports, and intervenes in districts and/or schools through a flexible, comprehensive state accountability system that includes growth

measures, and educators implement strategies to close achievement gaps and accelerate learning, then students will meet or exceed their expected individual growth annually.

GOAL 3 SUMMARY

Goal 3: Each student will develop and apply personal competencies that promote learning and success in life. (This aligns with the governor’s education goals to “increase student performance at all grade levels” and “raise enrollment and graduation rates of secondary and post-secondary students in demand fields.”)

Goal Explanation: Personal competencies are related sets of skills and knowledge that are sometimes called "success habits," or “executive functions,” and are fundamental to educational attainment and successful employment. Personal competencies include the following:

- Prior knowledge, which facilitates new learning and broader knowledge in specific contexts;
- Self-regulation of learning and use of learning strategies;
- Engagement and persistence in pursuit of goals; and
- Sense of self-worth, regard for others, and the ability to set positive goals and make responsible decisions.

Other personal competencies may be identified as research advances and demonstrates their causative relationship to learning.

Measure(s): Reduce the chronic absence rate by reducing the percentage of students who are absent for more than 10% of the time the student is enrolled in school. In 2016, 14.88 percent of all students were chronically absent from school in Arkansas.

Increase the percentage of students prepared for work and community. Goal 3 will be measured by the percentage of districts using and reporting quality indicators within their local cycle of inquiry that relate to personal competencies. At this time, this data will not be included in the ESSA School Index for federal or state accountability. All data will be analyzed at the local level. ADE will continue to collaborate with district, other states, and partners to consider potential measurement models.

Strategies:

- Strategy: 3.1 - We believe when ADE collaborates with stakeholders to identify best practices for developing personal competencies, and educators integrate personal competency development into student-focused learning systems, then students will develop and apply personal competencies that promote learning and success in life.

- Strategy: 3.2 - We believe when ADE advocates for policies and provides guidance to include personal competencies in learning, assessment, and accountability systems, and educators integrate personal competency development into student-focused learning systems, then students will develop and apply personal competencies that promote learning and success in life.
- Strategy: 3.3 - We believe when ADE outlines personal competency expectations and aligns data collection and reporting tools, and educators use data to integrate personal competency expectations into student-focused learning systems, then students will develop and apply personal competencies that promote learning and success in life.
- Strategy: 3.4 - We believe when ADE leverages support of employers and communities to partner with educators in developing diverse learning opportunities, and educators support students in practicing personal competencies in a variety of situations, then students will develop and apply personal competencies that promote learning and success in life.
- Strategy: 3.5 - We believe when ADE provides professional learning on the development of personal competencies and recognizes excellent teachers and leaders in integrating personal competencies into learning, and educators support their colleagues in integrating personal competencies in student-focused learning systems, then students will develop and apply personal competencies that promote learning and success in life.
- Strategy: 3.6 - We believe when ADE values the role of personal competency development in enabling and enhancing student learning and success, and educators integrate personal competency development into student-focused learning systems, then students will develop and apply personal competencies that promote learning and success in life.

GOAL 4 SUMMARY

Goal 4: Each student will be actively engaged in college, career preparation, military service, and/or competitive employment one year after graduation. (This aligns with the governor’s education goals to “raise enrollment and graduation rates of secondary and post-secondary students in demand fields” and “align education and economic development initiatives with the needs of business.”)

Goal Explanation: The first part of this goal states that all Arkansas students will graduate from high school. A year after graduation each student will be engaged in a productive next stage in life — enrolled in college, enlisted in the military, gainfully employed, getting training for a career, or some combination of these endeavors. Successful engagement in school, training, military service, or competitive work is an indication that the student was well-prepared by the Arkansas education system. Competitive employment means that the job requires skills and is sought after as desirable work, indicating the employee is on a track that provides opportunity for advancement.

Measure(s): Increase the four-year cohort graduation rate. The 2015 four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for the state was 85.71%. The 2016 four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for the state was 87.02%. Schools are required under Every Student Succeeds Act to exceed a 67% graduation rate.

Increase student engagement one year after graduation. A future measure will include the percentage of students in a cohort who meet the expectation or some combination one year after graduation. The ADE will work with other state agencies to gather data related to this goal.

Strategies:

- Strategy: 4.1 - We believe when ADE advocates for policies and provides guidance to align completion/entry criteria between secondary and post-secondary endeavors, and educators facilitate students completing high school and transitioning into post-secondary endeavors, then students will be actively engaged in college, career preparation, military service, and/or competitive employment one year after graduation.
- Strategy: 4.2 - We believe when ADE aligns data collection and reporting tools to incorporate completion/entry measures, and educators guide students in planning based on their progress and interests, then students will be actively engaged in college, career preparation, military service, and/or competitive employment one year after graduation.
- Strategy: 4.3 - We believe when ADE supports schools through a flexible, comprehensive state accountability system that includes graduation rate and first-year post-secondary engagement results, and educators employ student engagement, re-engagement, and alternative learning opportunities as needed, then students will graduate and become actively engaged in college, career preparation, military service, and/or competitive employment one year after graduation.

GOAL 5 SUMMARY

Goal 5: The Arkansas Department of Education will build the capacity of each team member to provide efficient and effective customer service that benefits students, respects taxpayers, and serves all stakeholders. (This aligns with the governor’s efficient and responsive goal to “focus state resources on essential services and employ enterprise solutions.” Providing excellent customer service will positively affect all of the governor’s education and quality of life goals.)

Goal Explanation: The Arkansas Department of Education's personnel operate as a team devoted to the service of Arkansans. A good team invests in building the skills of its team members so that they perform their roles with excellence and in harmony with the rest of the team to meet the agency's vision, mission, and goals. The agency constantly evaluates its internal processes to meet the needs of school districts, and through the strategic performance management process, the ADE

will shift to a support agency, providing targeted, personalized support to districts throughout the state.

Measure: Increase percentage of completed milestones and actions. Every three to five years the agency will update strategies to meet the goals of the vision for excellence. Milestones are developed yearly to plan the immediate work of the agency toward meeting the strategies. Each milestone is accomplished by a set of actions. Goal 5 is measured by meeting milestones and actions within the Strategic Performance Model. In 2016-2017, 156 actions were recommended, and 102 actions were completed on time. The average completion rate for 2016-2017 was 65%.

Strategies:

- Strategy: 5.1 - We believe when ADE participates in open lines of multi-way communication, and team members and other stakeholders provide ongoing feedback that builds a culture focused on the ADE vision and mission, then students, taxpayers, and all stakeholders will benefit from the work of the agency.
- Strategy: 5.2 - We believe when ADE disseminates timely and accurate information, and team members and other stakeholders have the information to interact with mutual trust and respect, then students, taxpayers, and all stakeholders will benefit from the work of the agency.
- Strategy: 5.3 - We believe when ADE team members engage in continuous professional learning, and team members are empowered to use efficient and effective job-specific practices, then students, taxpayers, and all stakeholders will benefit from the work of the agency.
- Strategy: 5.4 - If ADE models and supports efficient financial operating processes, then districts and/or schools will make data-informed decisions to utilize available state and federal funds in implementing effective K-12 programs, and students, taxpayers, and all stakeholders will benefit from the work of the agency.
- Strategy: 5.5 - If ADE implements a performance management system, then team members will be empowered to design, implement, and evaluate their work to support ADE's vision and mission, and students, taxpayers, and all stakeholders will benefit from the work of the agency.

APPENDIX: AGENCY PROFILE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

- Key stakeholders
- Primary services (and products, if applicable)
- Profile of the workforce
- Strategic challenges and advantages
- Other relevant information

See Appendix A: Agency Profile (separate attachment)

See Appendix B: Agency Organizational Chart (separate attachment)

ADDITIONAL PLAN INFORMATION:

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